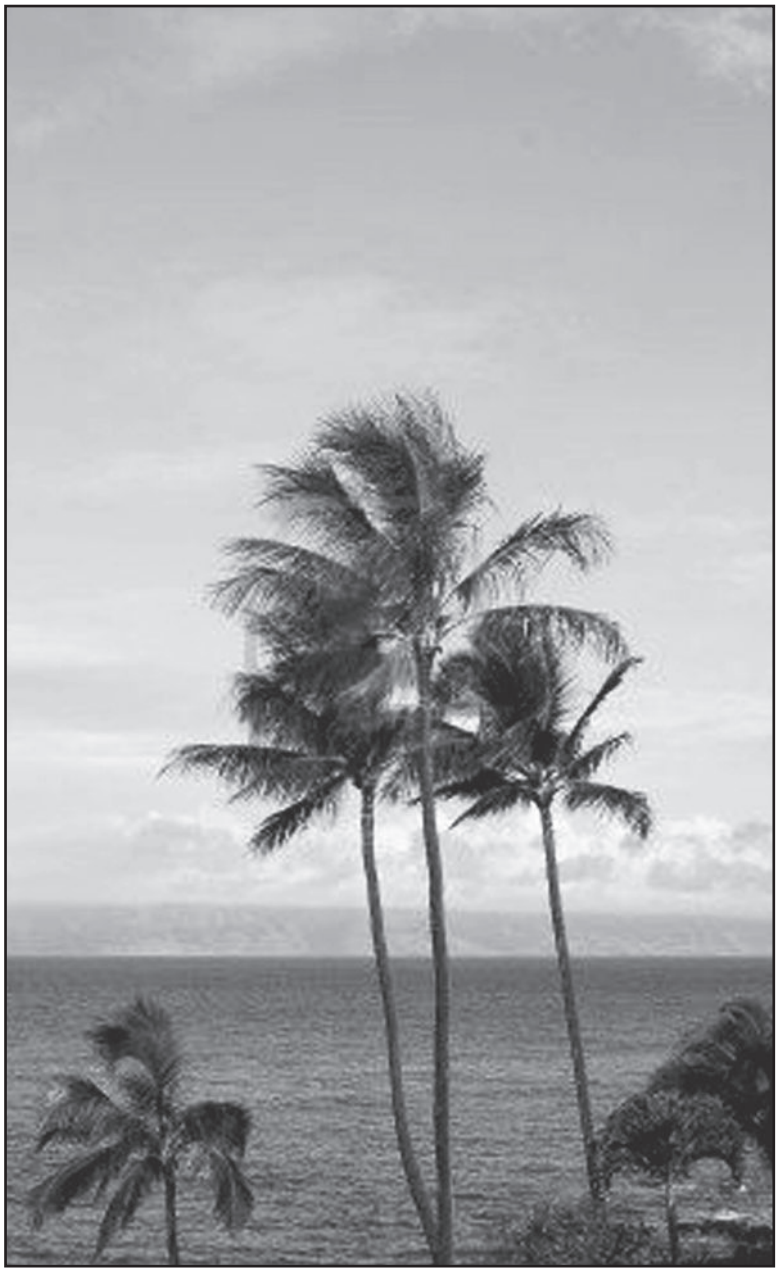


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The Mother's Advice

No, all is not sad and gloomy, neither the trees nor the sky nor the sea; everything is full of the divine Presence and is only too glad to speak of it to you. Shake off this childish depression and contemplate the Sun that is rising in your heart!

*

I always look upward. Beauty, Peace, Light are there, they are ready to come down. So, always aspire and look up, in order to manifest them upon this earth.

Do not look down at the ugly things of the world. Look always upward with me, whenever you feel sad.

The Mother

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Listen to the Voice of a Friend

You who are weary, downcast and bruised, you who fall, who think perhaps that you are defeated, hear the voice of a friend. He knows your sorrows, he has shared them, he has suffered like you from the ills of the earth; like you he has crossed many deserts under the burden of the day, he has known thirst and hunger, solitude and abandonment, and the cruellest of all wants, the destitution of the heart. Alas! he has known too the hours of doubt, the errors, the faults, the failings, every weakness.

But he tells you: Courage! Hearken to the lesson that the rising sun brings to the earth with its first rays each morning. It is a lesson of hope, a message of solace.

You who weep,who suffer and tremble, who dare not expect an end to your ills, an issue to your pangs, behold: there is no night without dawn and the day is about to break when darkness is thickest; there is no mist that the sun does not dispel, no cloud that it does not gild, no tear that it will not dry one day, no storm that is not followed by its shining triumphant bow; there is no snow that it does not melt, nor winter that it does not change into radiant spring.

And for you too, there is no affliction which does not bring its measure of glory, no distress which cannot be transformed into joy, nor defeat into victory, nor downfall into higher ascension, nor solitude into radiating centre of life, nor discord into harmony—sometimes it is a misunderstanding between two minds that compels two hearts to open to mutual communion; lastly, there is no infinite weakness that cannot be changed into strength. And it is even in supreme weakness that almightiness chooses to reveal itself!

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Listen, my little child, you who today feel so broken, so fallen perhaps, who have nothing left, nothing to cover your misery and foster your pride: never before have you been so great! How close to the summits is he who awakens in the depths, for the deeper the abyss, the more the heights reveal themselves!

Do you not know this, that the most sublime forces of the vasts seek to array themselves in the most opaque veils of Matter? Oh, the sublime nuptials of sovereign love with the obscurest plasticities, of the shadow's yearning with the most royal light!

If ordeal or fault has cast you down, if you have sunk into the nether depths of suffering, do not grieve—for there indeed the divine love and the supreme blessing can reach you! Because you have passed through the crucible of purifying sorrows, the glorious ascents are yours.

You are in the wilderness: then listen to the voices of the silence. The clamour of flattering words and outer applause has gladdened your ears, but the voices of the silence will gladden your soul and awaken within you the echo of the depths, the chant of divine harmonies!

You are walking in the depths of night: then gather the priceless treasures of the night. In bright sunshine, the ways of intelligence are lit, but in the white luminosities of the night lie the hidden paths of perfection, the secret of spiritual riches.

You are being stripped of everything: that is the way towards plenitude. When you have nothing left, everything will be given to you. Because for those who are sincere and true, from the worst always comes the best.

Every grain that is sown in the earth produces a thousand. Every wing-beat of sorrow can be a soaring

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towards glory.

And when the adversary pursues man relentlessly, everything he does to destroy him only makes him greater.

Hear the story of the worlds, look: the great enemy seems to triumph. He casts the beings of light into the night, and the night is filled with stars. He rages against the cosmic working, he assails the integrity of the empire of the sphere, shatters its harmony, divides and subdivides it, scatters its dust to the four winds of infinity, and lo! the dust is changed into a golden seed, fertilising the infinite and peopling it with worlds which now gravitate around their eternal centre in the larger orbit of space —so that even division creates a richer and deeper unity, and by multiplying the surfaces of the material universe, enlarges the empire that it set out to destroy.

Beautiful indeed was the song of the primordial sphere cradled in the bosom of immensity, but how much more beautiful and triumphant is the symphony of the constellations, the music of the spheres, the immense choir that fills the heavens with an eternal hymn of victory!

Hear again: no state was ever more precarious than that of man when he was separated on earth from his divine origin. Above him stretched the hostile borders of the usurper, and at his horizon's gates watched jailers armed with flaming swords. Then, since he could climb no more to the source of life, the source arose within him; since he could no more receive the light from above, the light shone forth at the very centre of his being; since he could commune no more with the transcendent love, that love offered itself in a holocaust and chose each terrestrial being, each human self as its dwelling-place and sanctuary.

That is how, in this despised and desolate but fruitful

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and blessed Matter, each atom contains a divine thought, each being carries within him the Divine Inhabitant. And if no being in all the universe is as frail as man, neither is any as divine as he!

In truth, in truth, in humiliation lies the cradle of glory!

28 April 1912

The Mother

Perseverance Breaks down All Obstacles

It is by *persevering* that one conquers difficulties, not by running away from them. One who perseveres is sure to triumph. Victory goes to the most enduring. Always do your best and the Lord will take care of the results.

*

The most important is a steady, quiet endurance that does not allow any upsetting or depression to interfere with your progress. The sincerity of the aspiration is the assurance of the victory.

The Mother

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Cause of Depression - I

... one is almost constantly in an ordinary vital state where the least unpleasant thing very spontaneously and easily brings you depression — depression if you are a weak person, revolt if you are a strong one. Every desire which is not satisfied, every impulse which meets an obstacle, every unpleasant contact with outside things, very easily and very spontaneously creates depression or revolt, for that is the normal state of things — normal in life as it is today. While joy is an exceptional state. ...

The only thing which can be lasting is joy, if one enters into contact with the truth of the being which holds this joy permanently.

*

Be careful, child, do not open the door to depression, discouragement and revolt—this leads far, far away from consciousness and makes you sink into the depths of obscurity where happiness can no longer enter. Your great strength was your smile; because you knew how to smile at life, you also knew how to work with courage and steadiness, and in this you were exceptional. But... you have learned ... to be discontented, rebellious, depressed, and now you have let your smile slip away, and with it your faith and confidence in me; in this condition, if all the divine forces were to concentrate on you, it would be in vain — you would refuse to receive them.

There is only one remedy, and you must lose no time in accepting it: recover your smile, regain your faith, become once more the confident child you were...

The Mother

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Cause of Depression - II

Q: Not to be depressed means...?

Not to be depressed—it is extremely important. Depression is a sign of weakness, of a bad will somewhere, and bad will in the sense of a refusal to receive help, and a kind of weakness that's content to be weak. One becomes slack. The bad will is obvious, because there's a part of your being which tells you at that moment, "Depression is bad." You know that you shouldn't get depressed; well, the reply of that part which is depressed is almost, "Shut up! I want my depression." Try, you will see, you can try. It is always like that. Eh, it is not true? And then later one says again, "Afterwards, afterwards I shall see... for the moment I want it, and besides I have my reasons." There you are. It is a kind of revolt, a weak revolt, the revolt of something weak in the being.

*

In the psychological domain, only the patients who do not want to recover, do not recover. Perhaps it is the same for physical diseases?

Q: Dear Mother, what is all this about psychological and physical diseases? I understand nothing of it.

Psychological diseases are diseases of the thoughts and feelings, such as depression, revolt, sadness, etc. Physical diseases are those of the body.

The Mother

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Cause of Depression - III

... if you slip into depression, you cut every source of energy—from above, from below, from everywhere. That is the best way of falling into inertia. You must absolutely refuse to be depressed.

Depression is always the sign of an acute egoism. When you feel that it is coming near, tell yourself: "I am in a state of egoistic illness, I must cure myself of it."

*

You feel uneasy, very miserable, dejected, a bit unhappy: "Things are not quite pleasant today. They are the same as they were yesterday; yesterday they were marvellous, today they are not pleasing!"—Why? Because yesterday you were in a perfect state of surrender, more or less perfect—and today you aren't any more. So, what was so beautiful yesterday is no longer beautiful today. ... "Things are not beautiful, the world is nasty, people are not pleasant." It goes sometimes to this length: "The food is not good, yesterday it was excellent." It is the same but today it is not good! This is the barometer! You may immediately tell yourself that an insincerity has crept in somewhere. ... One knows whether one is happy or unhappy, one knows whether one is content or discontented, one doesn't need to ask oneself, put complicated questions for this, one knows it!—Well, it is very simple.

The moment you feel unhappy, you may write beneath it: "I am not sincere!" These two sentences go together:

"I FEEL UNHAPPY." "I AM NOT SINCERE."

Now, what is it that is wrong? Then one begins to take a look, it is easy to find out...

The Mother

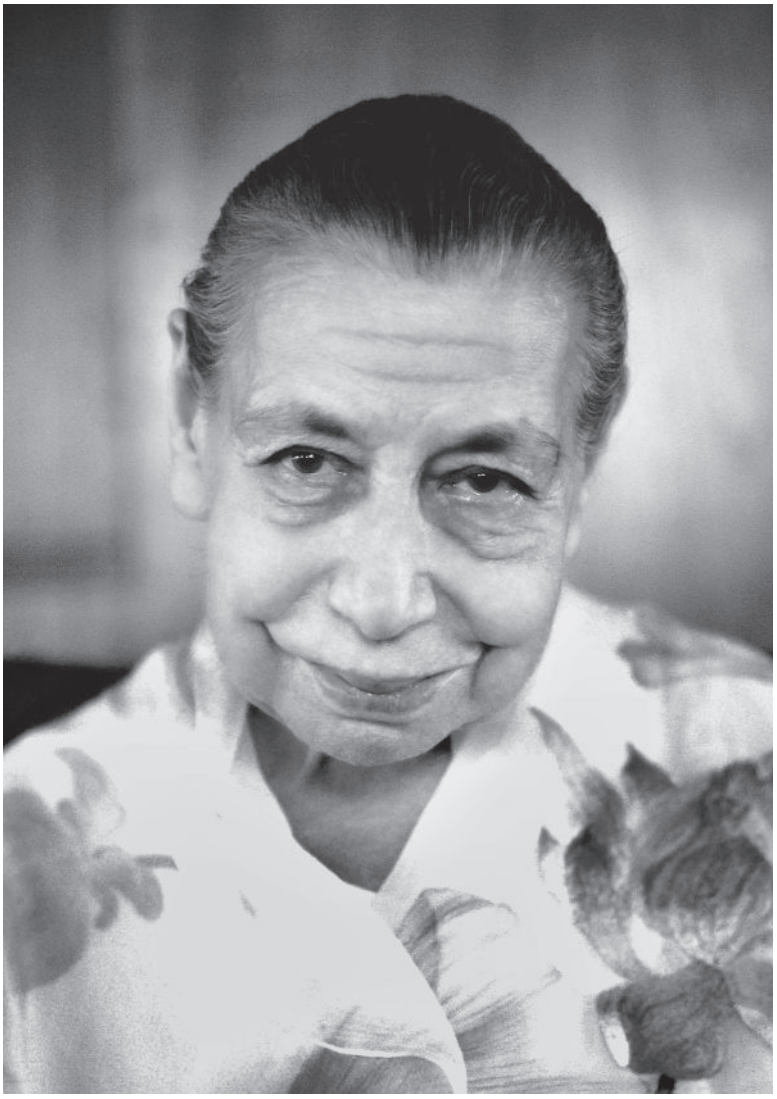
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The Vital Being in Us

The vital being in us is the seat of impulses and desires, of enthusiasm and violence, of dynamic energy and desperate depressions, of passions and revolts. It can set everything in motion, build and realise; but it can also destroy and mar everything. Thus it may be the most difficult part to discipline in the human being. ... With the collaboration of the vital no realisation seems impossible, no transformation impracticable. But the difficulty lies in securing this constant collaboration. The vital is a good worker, but most often it seeks its own satisfaction. If that is refused, totally or even partially, the vital gets vexed, sulks and goes on strike. Its energy disappears more or less completely and in its place leaves disgust for people and things, discouragement or revolt, depression and dissatisfaction. At such moments it is good to remain quiet and refuse to act; for these are the times when one does stupid things and in a few moments one can destroy or spoil the progress that has been made during months of regular effort. These crises are shorter and less dangerous for those who have established a contact with their psychic being which is sufficient to keep alive in them the flame of aspiration and the consciousness of the ideal to be realised. They can, with the help of this consciousness, deal with their vital as one deals with a rebellious child, with patience and perseverance, showing it the truth and light, endeavouring to convince it and awaken in it the goodwill which has been veiled for a time. By means of such patient intervention each crisis can be turned into a new progress, into one more step towards the goal.

The Mother

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O Bliss who ever dwellest deep-hid within
While men seek thee outside and never find. ...
Sri Aurobindo

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Cure of Depression - I

Q: How can depressions be controlled?

Oh! There's a very simple way. Depression occurs generally in the vital, and one is overpowered by depression only when one keeps the consciousness in the vital, when one remains there. The only thing to do is to get out of the vital and enter a deeper consciousness. Even the higher mind, the luminous, higher mind, the most lofty thoughts have the power to drive away depression. Even when one reaches just the highest domains of thought, usually the depression disappears. But in any case, if one seeks shelter in the psychic, then there is no longer any room for depression.

Depression may come from two causes: either from a want of vital satisfaction or from a considerable nervous fatigue in the body. Depression arising from physical fatigue is set right fairly easily: one has but to take rest. One goes to bed and sleeps until one feels well again, or else one rests, dreams, lies down. The want of vital satisfaction comes up rather easily and usually one must face it with one's reason, must ferret out the cause of the depression, what has brought about the lack of satisfaction in the vital; and then one looks at it straight in the face and asks oneself whether that indeed has anything to do with one's inner aspiration or whether it is simply quite an ordinary movement. Generally one discovers that it has nothing to do with the inner aspiration and one can quite easily overcome it and resume one's normal movement. If that is not enough, then one must go deeper and deeper until one touches the psychic reality. Then one has only to put this psychic reality in contact with the movement of depression, and instantaneously it will

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vanish into thin air.

As for fighting in the vital domain itself—well, some people are good fighters and love to struggle with their vital — but to tell you the truth, that is much more difficult.

Q: Once the psychic has come to the front, can it withdraw again?

Yes. Generally one has a series of experiences of identification, very intense at first, which later gradually diminish, and then one day you find that they have disappeared. Still you must not be disturbed, for it is quite a common phenomenon. But next time—the second time—the contact is more easily obtained. And then comes a moment, which is not very far off, when as soon as one concentrates and aspires, one gets a contact. One may not have the power of keeping it all the time, but can get it at will. Then, from that moment things become very easy. When one feels a difficulty or there is a problem to be solved, when one wants to make progress or there is just a depression to conquer or an obstacle to be overcome or else simply for the joy of identification (for it is an experience that gives a very concrete joy; at the moment of identification one truly feels a very, very great joy), then, at any moment whatever, one may pause, concentrate for a while and aspire, and quite naturally the contact is established and all problems which were to be solved are solved. Simply to concentrate—to sit down and concentrate —to aspire in this way, and the contact is made, so to say, instantaneously.

There comes a time, as I said, when this does not leave you, that is, it is in the depths of the consciousness and supports all that you do, and you never lose the contact. Then many things disappear. For instance, depression is one of

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these things, discontentment, revolt, fatigue, depression, all these difficulties. And if one makes it a habit to step back, as we say, in one's consciousness and see on the screen of one's psychic consciousness — see all the circumstances, all the events, all the ideas, all the knowledge, everything — at that moment one sees *that* and has an altogether sure guide for everything that one may do. But this is bound to take a very long time to come.

The Mother

March 3, 1915:
On board the Kamo Maru

Solitude, a harsh, intense solitude, and always this strong impression of having been flung headlong into a hell of darkness! Never at any moment of my life, in any circumstances, have I felt myself living in surroundings so entirely opposite to all that I am conscious of as true, so contrary to all that is the essence of my life. Sometimes when the impression and the contrast grow very intense, I cannot prevent my total submission from taking on a hue of melancholy, and the calm and mute converse with the Master within is transformed for a moment into an invocation that almost supplicates, "O Lord, what have I done that Thou hast thrown me thus into the sombre Night?" But immediately the aspiration rises, still more ardent, "Spare this being all weakness; suffer it to be the docile and clear-eyed instrument of Thy work, whatever that work may be."

The Mother

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Cure of Depression - II

... face your difficulties and obstacles with a smile. You do not sit any more in sackcloth and ashes, lamenting over your mistakes and feeling utterly crestfallen because you are not at the moment quite up to the mark. You simply chase away depression with a smile. A hundred mistakes do not matter to you: with a smile you recognise that you have erred and with a smile you resolve not to repeat the folly in the future. All depression and gloom is created by the hostile forces who are never so pleased as when throwing on you a melancholy mood. Humility is indeed one thing and depression quite another, the former a divine movement and the latter a very crude expression of the dark forces. Therefore, face your troubles joyously, oppose with invariable cheerfulness the obstacles that beset the road to transformation. The best means of routing the enemy is to laugh in his face! You may grapple and tussle for days and he may still show an undiminished vigour; but just once laugh at him and lo! he takes to his heels. A laugh of self-confidence and of faith in the Divine is the most shattering strength possible—it disrupts the enemy's front, spreads havoc in his ranks and carries you triumphantly onwards.

*

Q: You have said here: "To smile at an enemy is to disarm him." "Smile" means what? One ought not to smile at an enemy!*

One ought not to!... What I have stated here is an experience. It is the record of an experience which I expressed in gen-

* CWM Vol. 14, p. 178

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eral terms. But if, at a particular moment, somebody comes along with the blackest intentions, if one smiles at him, he is completely disarmed, he can do nothing any longer. But one must smile sincerely. One must not just grin or simper and think one... (*laughter*) I take "smile" in a rather complete meaning. That is to say, if one can be sufficiently master of oneself and above things, in a much higher consciousness which can see from above—even that which appears the most terrible and most dramatic to the ordinary human consciousness makes you smile as at a childishness. And so, if one is in that consciousness in which one can smile at everything (for one understands the causes of everything, and one also sees the forces working in all things), if one can be in that consciousness and then smile at what happens, immediately things change. Only, this is not a little external and social smile: it must be the psychic being which smiles.

*

You can smile genuinely at an enemy if you are above all insult and offence. This is the primary condition for the yogic attitude.

*

... the most essential quality is perseverance, endurance, and a... what shall I call it?— a kind of inner good humour which helps you not to get discouraged, not to become sad, and to face all difficulties with a smile. There is an English word which expresses this very well— cheerfulness. If you can keep this within you, you fight much better, resist much better, in the light, these bad influences which try to hinder you from progressing.

*

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Q: My heart feels arid, sad and gloomy, Mother.

Why don't you try to read something beautiful and interesting and turn your attention away from yourself? That is the best remedy.

*

If you can always smile at life, life also will always smile at you.

*

If one can smile eternally, one is eternally young.

*

Learn to smile always and in all circumstances; to smile at your sorrows as well as your joys, your sufferings as well as your hopes, for in a smile there is a sovereign power of self-mastery.

*

Generally speaking, man is an animal who takes himself terribly seriously. To know how to smile at oneself in all circumstances, to smile at one's sorrows and disillusions, ambitions and sufferings, indignation and revolt—what a powerful weapon with which to overcome oneself!

*

Never grumble. All sorts of forces enter you when you grumble and they pull you down. Keep smiling. I seem always to be joking but it is not mere joking. It is a confidence born from the psychic. A smile expresses the faith that nothing can stand against the Divine and that everything will come out all right in the end.

The Mother

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Cure of Depression - III

The attitude is ... very important, even the outer attitude. People do not know how important is faith, how faith is miracle, creator of miracles. If you expect at every moment to be lifted up and pulled towards the Divine, He will come to lift you and He will be there, quite close, closer, ever closer.

*

If one has within him faith in the divine grace, that the divine grace is watching over him, and that no matter what happens the divine grace is there, watching over him, one may keep this faith all one's life and always; and with this one can pass through all dangers, face all difficulties, and nothing stirs, for you have the faith and the divine grace is with you. It is an infinitely stronger, more conscious, more lasting force which does not depend upon the conditions of your physical build, does not depend upon anything except the divine grace alone, and hence it leans on the Truth and nothing can shake it.

*

... if you can keep within yourself a confidence, a candid trust which does not argue, and the sense of... yes, it is truly a kind of trust that what is done for you, in spite of all appearances, is always the best thing to lead you in the quickest way possible out of all your difficulties and towards the goal... if you can keep that strong in you, well, your path will become tremendously easier. ...

Well, it is this attitude; if you can tell yourself, "Good, perhaps the divine Grace deserves our confidence", simply

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this, nothing else, you will avoid many difficulties, many. In fact this avoids many difficulties even in ordinary life, and many worries.

*

... if your faith is not made of a complete trust in the Divine, well, you may very easily remain under the impression that you have faith and yet be losing all trust in the divine Power or divine Goodness, or the Trust the Divine has in you. ...

So, unless one adds to faith a total and complete trust in the Divine Grace, there will be difficulties. So both are necessary....

*

The faith spoken about is faith in the Divine Grace and the final success of the undertaking.

Many people begin, and then after some time come and tell you, "Oh, I shall never be able to go through. I have too many difficulties." So this means not having faith. ...

To keep one's faith is to say, "Good, I have difficulties but I am going on." Despair—that's what cuts off your legs, stops you, leaves you like this: "It is over, I can't go on any longer." It is indeed finished, and that's something which should not be allowed.

*

It is only by remaining perfectly peaceful and calm with an unshakable confidence and faith in the Divine Grace that you will allow circumstances to be as good as they can be. *The very best happens always* to those who have put their entire trust in the Divine and in the Divine alone.

The Mother

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Cure of Depression - IV

Pessimism is the demon's weapon ... it is always the devil; as soon as you see even the tail of pessimism, it is the devil. That is his great weapon.

*

To be pessimistic has never been of any use except to attract towards oneself just the things one fears. One must, on the contrary, drive off all pessimistic thoughts and compel oneself to think only of what one wants to happen.

*

Never regret what is past or imagine what will be.

Check pessimism in your thoughts as much as you can and become a voluntary optimist.

*

We shall have made a great leap towards realisation when we have driven all defeatism out of our consciousness.

It is by perfecting our faith in the Divine Grace that we shall be able to conquer the defeatism of the subconscient.

*

Taking life seriously generally consists of two movements: the first one is to give importance to things that probably have none, and the second is to want life to be reduced to a certain number of qualities that are considered pure and worthy of existence. In some people — for example, those Sri Aurobindo speaks about here, the "polite" or the puritans — this virtue becomes dry, arid, grey, aggressive and it finds fault everywhere, in everything that is joyful and free and happy.

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The only way to make life perfect — I mean here, life on earth, of course — is to look at it from high enough to see it as a whole, not only in its present totality, but in the whole of the past, present and future: what it has been, what it is and what it will be — one must be able to see everything at once. Because that is the only way to put everything in its place. Nothing can be eliminated, nothing *should* be eliminated, but each thing must be in its place in total harmony with all the rest.

*

So long as you can't be in joy, a constant, calm, peaceful, luminous, invariable joy, well, it means that you have still to work to purify yourself, and sometimes work hard. But this is the sign.

It is with the sense of separation that pain, suffering, misery, ignorance, and all incapacities have come. It is with an absolute self-giving, self-forgetfulness in a total consecration that suffering disappears and is replaced by a joy which nothing can veil.

And only when this joy is established here in this world can it be truly transformed and there be a new life, a new creation, a new realisation.

The Mother

Try to be happy
— immediately you will be closer to the Light.
The Mother

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Cure of Depression - V

Q: When a depression comes, what should one do?

Shake it off, as you shake off the dust from your feet.

*

Q: How to avoid attacks of depression?

Do not pay attention to the depression and act as if it was not there.

*

It is the ego that gets depressed.

Do not mind it. Go on quietly with your work and the depression will disappear.

*

Q: Dear Mother, for the past two days I have felt a great despair and sadness—so much that I think if it goes on for a few days more, it may be very difficult for me to get rid of these things. ...

There are thieves in the subtle world just as in the outer world. But you must close to them the doors of your thoughts and feelings as carefully as a prudent man bolts the doors of his house.

These suggestions of sadness, despair and suicide come from them (the thieves of the vital world), because it is when you are depressed that they are best able to rob you. You must not listen to them — you must reject the wicked suggestions and become yourself once again, that is to say, my "little smile".

*

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My dear child, will and energy can be cultivated just as the muscles are: by exercise. You must exercise your will to be patient and your energy to reject depression. I am always near you to help you with all my love.

*

What you must do is to give your vital a good beating as soon as it protests; for, when the physical is concerned, there is reason to be considerate and to take precautions, but with the vital the only method is a sound "kicking". Kick your vital the moment it complains, because there is no other way of getting out of the petty consciousness which attaches so much importance to creature comforts and social amenities instead of asking for the Light and the Truth.

One of the commonest demands of the vital is for praise. It hates to be criticised and treated as if it were of little importance. But it must be always prepared for rebuffs and stand them with absolute calm; nor must it pay attention to compliments, forgetting that each movement of self-satisfaction is an offering at the altar of the lords of falsehood.

*

Do not indulge in such ridiculous ideas. "Madness" and "hell" and "dark cell" are all in your imagination.

You had better replace them by the sense of my love and blessings.

*

Indeed, depression is the worst of all illnesses and we must reject it with as much energy as we use to get rid of a disease.

*

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My dear child, it seems to me that you are so often sad and depressed because your nerves are not very strong. You should eat more, sleep longer, take some exercise in the open air, etc.

*

[In periods of obscuration] to be able to remain in peace you must keep in your heart gratitude towards the Divine for all the help He gives. If gratitude also is veiled, the obscure periods last much longer. There is, however, a swift and effective remedy: it is to keep always burning in your heart the flame of purification, the aspiration for progress, the intensity, the ardour of consecration. This flame is kindled in the heart of all who are sincere; you must not let ingratitude cover it up with its ashes.

The Mother

Sources of the Passages Published in this Compilation

Page 3: CWM Vol. 16: p. 119; Vol. 13: p. 70. **Pages 4-7:** CWM 2: 42-44. **Page 7:** Quote-CWM 14: 172-74. **Page 8:** CWM 8: 192; 16: 67-68. **Page 9:** CWM 7: 10; 16: 72. **Page 10:** CWM 4: 10; 6: 215-16. **Page 11:** CWM 12: 6-7. **Page 12:** *Savitri*, p. 723. **Pages 13-15:** CWM 6: 32-34. **Page 15:** Quote — SABCL 22: 282-83. **Pages 16-18:** CWM 3: 138-39; 5: 370-71; 14: 191; 8: 23; 14: 263, 191, 191, 190, 189-90, 237-38. **Pages 19-20:** CWM 13: 78; 5: 298; 6: 445; 8: 39-40; 6: 440-41; 14: 94. **Pages 21-22:** CWM 11: 256-57; 16: 187; 12: 141; 16: 425; 10: 157; 7: 401; Quote - 14: 193. **Pages 23-25**: CWM 17: 17; 14: 263, 264; 16: 73-74, 145; 3: 137; 14: 263, 263; 16: 120; 14: 265. **Page 26:** CWM 7: 9-10; 4: 342. **Pages 27-29:** CWM 4: 248-49; 5: 257-59; Quote: *Bulletin*, Feb. 2007, p. 20. **Page 30:** CWM 10: 55-57. **Page 31:** CWM 2: 19-20. **Page 32:** SABCL 5: 603 (CWSA 2: 677). **Page 33:** *Champaklal Speaks*, 3rd revised edition, p. 363. **Pages 34-37:** SABCL 24: 1345, 1407; 23: 655; 24: 1347-48, 1348-49, 1350, 1348, 1352-53, 1506, 1502. Quote – *Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo,* 1983 ed., p. 462. **Pages 38-39:** SABCL 23: 576, 789; 24: 1634, 1636, 1430, 1118, 1351.

CWM denotes Collected Works of the Mother, Vols. 1-17, 1st ed. **SABCL**, Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, edition: 1971-73, 30 Volumes. In the references, the initial numeral specifies the Volume Number and the second number(s) the page(s) where the passage occurs in that volume.

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The Right Attitude

The right spirit means ... to keep one's trust, to remain quiet ... wait patiently for the attack to pass, keep one's trust. ... In any case the right spirit means not to lose courage, not to lose one's faith, not to be impatient, not to be depressed; to remain very quiet and peaceful with as much aspiration as one can have, and not worry about what is happening. To have the certitude that this will pass and all will be well. This indeed is the best thing.

*

First of all one must be conscious, then control, and by continuing the mastery one changes one's character. Changing the character is what comes last. One must control bad habits, the old habits, for a very long time for them to drop off and the character to change.

We may take the example of someone who has frequent depressions. When things are not exactly as he would like them to be, he becomes depressed. So, to begin with, he must become aware of his depression — not only of the depression but of the causes of depression, why he gets depressed so easily. Then, once he has become conscious, he must master the depressions, must stop being depressed even when the cause of depression is there — he must master his depression, stop it from coming. And finally, after this work has been done for a sufficiently long time, the nature loses the habit of having depressions and no longer reacts in the same way, the nature is changed.

The Mother

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Depression and Enthusiasm — Two Extremes

These are the two extremes, and each has its difficulties, its obstacles.

Depression, unless one has a strong will, suggests, "This is not worth while, one may have to wait a lifetime." As for enthusiasm, it expects to see the vital transformed overnight: "I am not going to have any difficulty henceforth, I am going to advance rapidly on the path of yoga, I am going to gain the divine consciousness without any difficulty." There are some other difficulties.... One needs a little time, much perseverance. So the vital, after a few hours — perhaps a few days, perhaps a few months — says to itself: "We haven't gone very far with our enthusiasm, has anything been really done? Doesn't this movement leave us just where we were, perhaps worse than we were, a little troubled, a little disturbed? Things are no longer what they were, they are not yet what they ought to be. It is very tiresome, what I am doing." And then, if one pushes a little more, here's this gentleman saying, "Ah, no! I have had enough of it, leave me alone. I don't want to move, I shall stay in my corner, I won't trouble you, but don't bother me!" And so one has not gone very much farther than before.

This is one of the big obstacles which must be carefully avoided. As soon as there is the least sign of discontentment, of annoyance, the vital must be spoken to in this way, "My friend, you are going to keep calm, you are going to do what you are asked to do, otherwise you will have to deal with me." And to the other, the enthusiast who says, "Everything must be done now, immediately", your reply is, "Calm yourself a little, your energy is excellent, but it must not be spent in five minutes. We shall need it for a long

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time, keep it carefully and, as it is wanted, I shall call upon your goodwill. You will show that you are full of goodwill, you will obey, you won't grumble, you will not protest, you will not revolt, you will say 'yes, yes', you will make a little sacrifice when asked, you will say 'yes' whole-heartedly."

*

All your troubles, depression, discouragement, disgust, fury, all, all come from the vital. It is that which turns love into hate, it is that which induces the spirit of vengeance, rancour, bad will, the urge to destroy and to harm. It is that which discourages you when things are difficult and not to its liking. And it has an extraordinary capacity for going on strike! When it is not satisfied, it hides in a corner and does not budge. And then you have no more energy, no more strength, you have no courage left. Your will is like... like a withering plant. All resentment, disgust, fury, all despair, grief, anger — all that comes from this gentleman. For it is energy in action.

Therefore, it depends on which side it turns. And I tell you, it has a very strong habit of going on strike. That is its most powerful weapon: "Ah! you are not doing what I want, well, I am not going to move, I shall sham dead." And it does that for the least reason. It has a very bad character; it is very touchy and it is very spiteful — yes, it is very ill-natured. For I believe it is very conscious of its power and it feels clearly that if it gives itself wholly, there is nothing that will resist the momentum of its force. And like all people who have a weight in the balance, the vital also bargains: "I shall give you my energy, but you must do what I want. If you do not give me what I ask for, well, I withdraw my energy." And you will be flat as a pancake. And it is true, it happens like that.

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It is difficult to regulate it. Yet naturally, when you have succeeded in taming it, you have something powerful in hand for realisation. It is that which can carry by storm the biggest obstacles. It is that which is capable of turning an idiot into an intelligent person — it alone can do so; for if one yearns passionately for progress, if the vital takes it into its head that one must progress, even the greatest idiot can become intelligent! I have seen this, I am not speaking from hearsay; I have seen it, I have seen people who were dull, stupid, incapable of understanding, who understood nothing—you could go on explaining something to them for months, it would not enter, as though one were speaking to a block of wood—and then all of a sudden their vital was caught in a passion; they wanted simply to please someone or get something, and for that one had to understand, one had to know, it was necessary. Well, they set everything moving, they shook up the sleeping mind, they poured energy into all the corners where there was none; and they understood, they became intelligent. ....

So then, take great care of it. Treat it with great consideration but never submit to it. For it will drag you into all kinds of troublesome and untoward experiments; and if you succeed in convincing it in some way or other, then you will advance with giant strides on the path.

The Mother

The weakness is simply a bad habit of the body and the depression a bad habit of the heart. There is no truth behind them.

The Mother

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Failures and Defeats in Life

Q: For some people events are always contrary to what they desire or aspire for or believe to be good for them. They often despair. Is this a necessity for their progress?

Despair is never a necessity for progress, it is always a sign of weakness and tamas; it often indicates the presence of an adverse force, that is to say, a force that is purposely acting against sadhana.

So, in all circumstances of life you must always be very-careful to guard against despair. Besides, this habit of being sombre, morose, of despairing, does not truly depend on events, but on a lack of faith in the nature. One who has faith, even if only in himself, can face all difficulties, all circumstances, even the most adverse, without discouragement or despair. He fights like a man to the end. Natures that lack faith also lack endurance and courage. ...

As for the question of what is necessary for progress, in an evolving world everything is necessarily a help to progress; but individual progress extends over a considerable number of lives and through innumerable experiences. It cannot be judged on the basis of a single life between birth and death. On the whole, it is certain that the experience of a life of failure and defeat is just as useful to the soul's growth as the experience of a life of success and victory; even more so, no doubt, than the experience of an uneventful life, as human existence usually is, in which success and failure, satisfaction and disappointment, pleasure and pain mingle and follow one another — a life that seems "natural" and does not require any great effort.

The Mother

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Revelations of New Horizons

If at any time a deep sorrow, a searing doubt or an intense pain overwhelms you and drives you to despair, there is an infallible way to regain calm and peace.

In the depths of our being there shines a light whose brilliance is equalled only by its purity; a light, a living and conscious portion of a universal godhead who animates and nourishes and illumines Matter, a powerful and unfailing guide for those who are willing to heed his law, a helper full of solace and loving forbearance towards all who aspire to see and hear and obey him. No sincere and lasting aspiration towards him can be in vain; no strong and respectful trust can be disappointed, no expectation ever deceived.

My heart has suffered and lamented, almost breaking beneath a sorrow too heavy, almost sinking beneath a pain too strong.... But I have called to thee, O divine comforter, I have prayed ardently to thee, and the splendour of thy dazzling light has appeared to me and revived me. ...

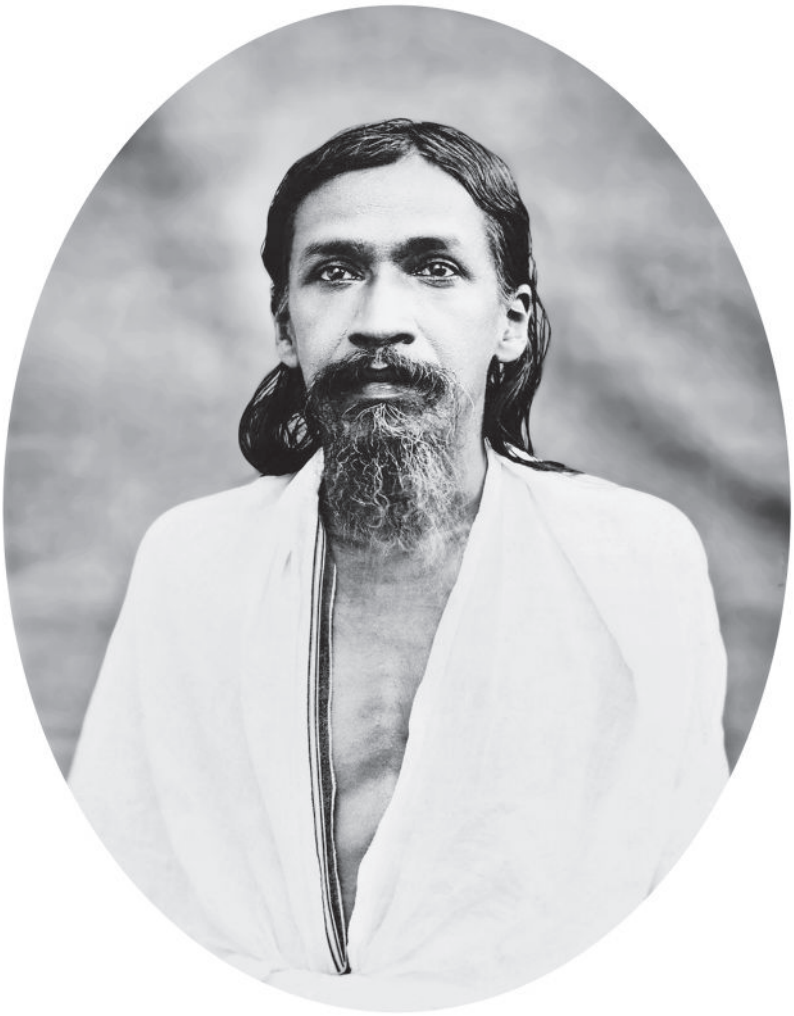
Suffering is not something inevitable or even desirable, but when it comes to us, how helpful it can be!

Each time we feel that our heart is breaking, a deeper door opens within us, revealing new horizons, ever richer in hidden treasures, whose golden influx brings once more a new and intenser life to the organism on the brink of destruction.

And when, by these successive descents, we reach the veil that reveals thee as it is lifted, O Lord, who can describe the intensity of Life that penetrates the whole being, the radiance of the Light that floods it, the sublimity of the Love that transforms it for ever!

The Mother

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Seer deep-hearted, divine king of the secrecies,
Occult fountain of love sprung from the heart of God,
Ways thou knewest no feet ever in Time had trod.

Sri Aurobindo

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Guidance to a Confused Disciple

Q: I do not understand my present condition. I am puzzled as to where I am going, what am I doing? Please guide me.

I do not quite know what is the drift of your questions. It sounds as if you had been allowing yourself to be influenced by a vague and confused atmosphere of discouragement and barren questioning which has caught many in the Ashram. Otherwise there is no ground for any such feelings.

Where you are? In the Mother's presence here and close to me.

Where you are going? Towards union with the Divine through dedication and service.

What you are doing here? Service and self-giving to the Divine.

The rest depends, as the Mother writes to you, in the simplicity and fullness with which you give yourself and serve.

If there is anything more special in your thoughts that has disturbed you, it is better to say clearly what it is. But do not listen to the thoughts spoken or silently suggested that are moving about the Ashram, and of which I have spoken, for these are a poison that will only bring discontent and depression.

Sri Aurobindo

25.5.1935

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Let Not Depression Depress You

All depression is bad as it lowers the consciousness, spends the energy, opens to adverse forces.

*

To yield to depression when things go wrong is the worst way of meeting the difficulty. There must be some desire or demand within you, conscious or subconscious, that gets excited and revolts against its not being satisfied. The best way is to be conscious of it, face it calmly and steadily throw it out.

If the lower vital (not the mind only) could permanently make up its mind that all desire and demand are contrary to the Truth and no longer call for them, these things would lose very soon their force of return.

*

The depression and vital struggle must have been due to some defect of over-eagerness and straining for a result in your former effort — so that when a fall in the consciousness came, it was a distressed, disappointed and confused vital that came to the surface giving full entry to the suggestions of doubt, despair and inertia from the adverse side of Nature. You have to move towards a firm basis of calm and equality in the vital and physical no less than in the mental consciousness; let there be the full downflow of Power and Ananda, but into a firm Adhara capable of containing it—it is complete equality that gives that capacity and firmness.

*

The rule in yoga is not to let the depression depress you, to

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stand back from it, observe its cause and remove the cause; for the cause is always in oneself, perhaps a vital defect somewhere, a wrong movement indulged or a petty desire causing a recoil, sometimes by its satisfaction, sometimes by its disappointment. In yoga a desire satisfied, a false movement given its head produces very often a worse recoil than disappointed desire.

What is needed for you is to live more deeply within, less in the outer vital and mental part which is exposed to these touches. The inmost psychic being is not oppressed by them; it stands in its own closeness to the Divine and sees the small surface movements as surface things foreign to the true Being.

*

The outer reasons [for despondency] are created by the mind and it is the mind that responds or does not respond to them. Nothing outward can affect unless the mind (vital mind usually) represents them to itself in a particular way and makes its own response.

*

If mind (mental mind, vital mind, physical mind, subconscient mind) does not respond to outer things, depression is impossible. The self at one end, the stone at the other never get into depression and between them the true mind, true vital, true physical consciousness never get depression because they do not give responses to things that create depression.

*

It is not possible that there should not be stumbles, failures,

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etc. in the work of self-purification and change, but to feel upset or remorseful over them is harmful rather than helpful; it easily brings depression, and depression brings clouding of the mind and weakness. To observe calmly the wrong movement and its nature (here it was the tongue that was at fault and the tongue is always an easily erring member) and to set it right inwardly is always the best way. Calm, especially when the true spiritual calm of the Self is there, is the thing that must always be preserved; with that everything else can be done in time and with the least trouble.

*

Who does not feel the confusion or ignorance somewhere in himself so long as the full light and the true force have not come? Your mistake is to be always thinking about the confusion and struggling with it, dwelling on it, magnifying it by thinking about it, treating it as if it were the only thing real and true. When you feel the force, turn to the force and let it act—it is that Force and not you or your brooding and struggles that can get rid of the confusion and darkness. What is the use of examining whether your faith and confidence are of the "true" kind or not? To feel the force, be quiet, let it act is all that is needed.

*

If there are always forces around which are concerned to depress and discourage, there are always forces above and around us which we can draw upon,—draw into ourselves to restore, to fill up again with strength and faith and joy and the power that perseveres and conquers. It is really a habit that one has to get of opening to these helpful forces and either passively receiving them or actively drawing

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upon them—for one can do either. It is easier if you have the conception of them above and around you and the faith and the will to receive them—for that brings the experience and concrete sense of them and the capacity to receive at need or at will. It is a question of habituating your consciousness to get into touch and keep in touch with these helpful forces—and for that you must accustom yourself to reject the impressions forced on you by the others, depression, self-distrust, repining and all similar disturbances.

*

These things that come to frighten you are merely impressions thrown on you by small vital forces which want to prevent you (by making you nervous) pushing on the sadhana. They can really do nothing to you, only you must reject all fear. Keep always this thought when these things come "The Mother's protection is with me, nothing bad can happen",—for when there is the psychic opening and one puts one's faith in the Mother, that is sufficient to ward these things off. Many sadhaks learn, when they have alarming dreams, to call the Mother's name in the dream itself and then the things that menace them become helpless or cease. You must therefore refuse to be intimidated and reject these impressions with contempt. If there is anything frightening, call down the Mother's protection.

Sri Aurobindo

> … within there is a soul and above there is Grace.
> "This is all you know or need to know."
>
> Sri Aurobindo

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Gospel of Sorrow

Fits of depression and darkness and despair are a tradition in the path of sadhana — in all yogas oriental or occidental they seem to have been the rule. I know all about them myself — but my experience has led me to the perception that they are an unnecessary tradition and could be dispensed with if one chose. That is why whenever they come in you or others I try to lift up before them the gospel of faith. If still they come, one has to get through them as soon as possible and get back into the sun.

*

As for despondency, it is surely a terrible burden to carry on the way. One has to pass through it sometimes, like Christian of *The Pilgrim's Progress* through the Slough of Despond but its constant reiteration cannot be anything but an obstacle. The Gita specially says, "Practise the yoga with an undespondent heart—*anirviṇṇascetasā*." I know perfectly well that pain and suffering and struggle and accesses of despair are natural—though not inevitable on the way—not because they are helps but because they are imposed on us by the darkness of this human nature out of which we have to struggle into the Light.

*

Thirst for the Divine is one thing and depression is quite another, nor is depression a necessary consequence of the thirst being unsatisfied, that may lead to a more ardent thirst or to a fixed resolution and persistent effort or to a more yearning call or to a psychic sorrow which is not at all identical with depression and despair. Depression is a clouded grey state in its nature and it is more difficult for

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light to come through clouds and greyness than through a clear atmosphere. That depression obstructs the inner light is a matter of general experience.

*

To make a *vāda* or gospel of sorrow is dangerous because sorrow, if indulged, becomes a habit, sticks and few things, if once they stick, can be more sticky.

*

The sadness you speak of is not psychic—for "painful longing" belongs to the vital, not to the psychic. The psychic never feels a sadness from disappointed desire, because that is not in its nature; the sorrow it sometimes feels is when it sees the Divine rejected or the mental, vital, physical in man or in nature turning away from the Truth to follow perversion, darkness or ignorance.

*

The uneasiness created by the psychic is not depression—it is in the nature of a rejection of the wrong movement.

If the uneasiness causes depression or vital dissatisfaction, it is not the psychic.

*

This tendency to irrational sadness and despondency and these imaginations, fears and perverse reasonings—always repeating, if you will take careful notice, the same movements, ideas and feelings and even the same language and phrases like a machine—is a characteristic working of the lower vital nature. The only way to get rid of it is to meet it with a fixed resolution of the higher vital and the mind and the psychic being to combat, reject and master it.

Sri Aurobindo

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Faithfulness to the Light of the Soul and the Divine Call

Cast away from you these movements of doubt, depression and the rest which are no part of your true and higher nature. Reject these suggestions of inability, unfitness and all these irrational movements of an alien force. Remain faithful to the Light of your soul even when it is hidden by clouds. My help and the Mother's will be there working behind even in the moments when you cannot feel it. The one need for you and for all is to be, even in the darkness of the powers of obscurity of the physical consciousness, stubbornly faithful to your soul and to the remembrance of the Divine Call. Be faithful and you will conquer.

*

When I spoke of being faithful to the light of the soul and the divine Call,... I was simply affirming the great need in all crises and attacks,—to refuse to listen to any suggestions, impulses, lures and to oppose to them all the call of the Truth, the imperative beckoning of the Light. In all doubt and depression, to say, **"I belong to the Divine, I cannot fail"**; to all suggestions of impurity and unfitness, to reply, **"I am a child of Immortality chosen by the Divine; I have but to be true to myself and to Him—the victory is sure; even if I fell, I would rise again"**; to all impulses to depart and serve some smaller ideal, to reply, **"This is the greatest, this is the Truth that alone can satisfy the soul within me; I will endure through all tests and tribulations to the very end of the divine journey"**. This is what I mean by faithfulness to the Light and the Call.

(SABCL Vol. 24, p.1425)

Sri Aurobindo

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Depression – Its Cause and Cure

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Announcements

A Seminar on the Power of Beauty will be held from 21st to 23rd November 2011 at Society House (Beach office), Puducherry. Organised by the Women's Council of Sri Aurobindo Society, all interested are welcome to participate in the Seminar. For details, write to: The Secretary, Women's Council, Sri Aurobindo Society, 11, Saint Martin Street, Puducherry - 605001. E-mail: sushila@aurosociety.org

These annual seminars are aimed at introducing the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's teaching which serve as a beacon-light in our day-to-day life and help us to go deep within.

*

Spandana: Feeling the Pulsation of a Divine Language — One Week Intensive Course on Sanskrit will be conducted from 15th to 21st, January 2012, at the same venue as above. Interested participants may contact Dr. Sampadananda Mishra, Chief Coordinator, Sri Aurobindo Foundation for Indian Culture (SAFIC), Sri Aurobindo Society, Society House, No. 11, St. Martin Street, Puducherry – 605001. The last date for registration is 30th of November.

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